



**Final version
ABG/MC 11/4/2011**

**Increasing Europe's competitiveness through cultural heritage research: an initiative of the EU
project NET-HERITAGE**

Conference, Brussels, 24 March 2011

SUMMARY OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION

"Towards a more integrative approach in cultural heritage research"

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Rapporteur: Astrid Brandt-Grau, EC, DG Research & Innovation**

Participants:

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Mechthild Rössler, UNESCO
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The various interventions reported during the three previous sessions show the importance of building a more integrated approach in cultural heritage research.

The participants of the panel discussion addressed fundamental questions, some in relation to the Green Paper of the European Commission "From challenging to Opportunities: towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding", submitted for the current Stakeholder Consultation (http://ec.europa.eu/research/csfr/index_en.cfm ,deadline 20 May 2011).

Session participants recalled that the European Commission Green Paper highlights the need to:

- focus on common strategic priorities addressing societal challenges, competitiveness and research excellence;
- give more coherent support to projects and organisations across the innovation cycle from research to retail;
- include non-technological innovation and market take up.

The session provided a challenging opportunity to hear the views of various actors and stakeholders working in cultural heritage research, particularly at this crucial moment when the future European Framework Programme for research and innovation is being defined.

Below is a synthesis of the views of speakers on the following topics:

1°) The innovation cycle from research to market and EU support to SMEs

- From the point of view of a small company, it is not easy to apply for EU funds as the procedures are very complex and time-consuming. Sometimes the administrative work and the requirements connected to the funded project exceed the benefits. Simplification of procedures is urgently needed.
- In the field of preservation of cultural heritage the time to bring products and services to the market is often very long especially when new chemicals have to be tested and their application procedures standardized before being applied to cultural heritage assets.
- Bringing a product or a service to the market is often as long as the research itself and needs additional funding. In this respect new financial tools and incentives and better connection with investors would be very welcome.
- Better involvement of end-users, especially conservators, from the start of the project as research in this field should be driven by the needs of these end-users.

2°) Coordination of European countries for cultural heritage research and Joint Programming

- In line with the general approach of the European Research Area (ERA), further efforts to improve information, communication and coordination of research between Member States, and particularly within Member States at regional level, are needed to avoid fragmentation and overlapping and to ensure a better complementarity with EU funding.
- EU is expected to support the Joint Programming Initiative on "Cultural Heritage and Global Change: a new challenge for Europe", coordinated by Member States, with financial instruments such as ERA NET + and/or Article 185 of the new Lisbon Treaty. Cultural heritage should remain a priority for research in the next Framework Programme.

3°) Involvement of citizens and civil society

- There is an insufficient focus on the social impact of cultural heritage and the reflection on the value cultural heritage represents for society. For local development, a proposal was made to "protect and enhance the spirit of places" linking tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- At present, research agendas are largely set by scientists. There needs to be better integration of user needs when identifying projects, as well as a better integration of project results in the user body of knowledge.
- Emphasis was also given to the importance of the inter-cultural dialogue for social cohesion, reconciliation and peace.

4°) Connection between cultural heritage and other economic sectors (tourism, construction, education, regional policy)

Europe's cultural heritage is the world's most diverse and rich patrimony that attracts millions of visitors every year.

It is of exceptional economic importance and the links with other economic sectors such as enterprises, tourism, regional policy, rehabilitation of historic buildings, cities and urban environment, have to be strengthened, including by promoting public-private partnerships.

Cultural heritage should be considered not a burden but an asset for the economic prosperity of a country, region or a city.

5°) International cooperation

- The JPI on cultural heritage will foster international cooperation and enhance the international attractiveness of European cultural heritage research. There is a need to provide better support for actions in favour of third countries.

- ICCROM suggests creating an Open Access literature repository for the dissemination of research results to a wider public. In terms of "Impact Factor Ratings", conservation journals cannot compete with high level scientific journals. However, scientists are encouraged to publish in such high impact journals to gain recognition.

- One of UNESCO's priorities is to enhance universal access to information and knowledge and to encourage cooperation and synergies between EU research programmes and UNESCO's heritage and capacity building activities (cf. World Heritage Centre, UNESCO Chairs). The synergies between UNESCO and the EU should also be developed further.

Following the panel discussion, participants of the NET HERITAGE conference highlighted further issues such as the need to:

- give better definition to the legal competences of the EU in the field of cultural heritage.
- better balance the research effort for movable and immovable cultural heritage,
- better sustain the interest of private owners in the preservation of cultural heritage through financial incentives,
- clearly anchor cultural heritage within the EU sustainability strategy and the sustainability policies of Member States,
- improve the policy uptake of cultural heritage research in the fields of urban development, tourism, environment and sustainable development, through participation in large dissemination events involving all stakeholders (cf. envisaged conference under the CY EU Presidency),
- ensure a better take-up of innovative results coming out of EU Framework Programmes with a good chance to bring products/services to the market,
- encourage better uptake of the Marie Curie Fellowships fostering the career development of young scientists,
- ensure better consistency between EU programmes and activities regarding their potential impact on cultural heritage.